

Sentencing and Corrections

Overall, the United States incarcerated 2,026,596 persons at year end 1999. (Beck, A. August 2000. *Prisoners in 1999*, NCJ 183476. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.)

The rate of incarceration in prison at year end 1999 was 476 sentenced inmates per 100,000 U.S. residents— up from 292 in 1990. About 1 in every 110 men and 1 in every 1,695 women were sentenced prisoners under the jurisdiction of state or federal authorities. (Ibid.)

Of the 33,855 offenders returning to federal prison between 1986 and 1997, 54 % returned within one year of being released; an additional 34 % returned within two years of being released. About 12 % returned after two to three years. (Sabol, W. et al. September 2000. *Offenders Returning to Federal Prison, 1986-97*, NCJ 182991. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.)

Offenders originally convicted of violent offenses were more likely to return (32 %) to federal prison within three years of their release than offenders who had been convicted of property (17 % returned), drug (13 %) or public order (15 %) offenses. (Ibid.)

In 1996, state courts convicted 997,970 adult offenders on felony charges, an average growth of approximately 5 % every year since 1988. (Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). May 1999. "Felony Sentences in State Courts." *Bulletin*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs.)

Of felons convicted, 54 % were white, 44 % were black, and 2 % were other races; the average age was thirty-one. (Ibid., 1)

Sixty-nine percent of all convicted felons were sentenced to a period of confinement— 38 % to state prisons and 31 % to local jails. The remaining 31 % were sentenced to straight probation with no jail or prison time to serve. (Ibid., 3)

Under the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984, the proportion of defendants sentenced to prison increased from 54 % during 1988 to 71 % during 1998. (Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). September 1999. *Federal Criminal Case Processing, 1998*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.)

On September 30, 1998, 107,912 offenders were serving a prison sentence in federal prison; 58 % were incarcerated for a drug offense; 11 % for a violent offense; 8 % for a weapons offense; 8 % for a property offense; 7 % for an immigration offense; and 8 % for all other offenses. (Ibid.)

Nearly seven in ten state prison admissions for a violent crime in 1997 were in states requiring offenders to serve at least 85 % of their sentence. (Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). January 1999. "Truth in Sentencing in State Prisons." *Special Report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.)

In 1996 the mean prison sentence for murder and non-negligent manslaughter was 21 + years; the median was twenty-five years. (Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). May 1999. "Felony Sentences in State Courts, 1996." *Bulletin*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 3.)

Time to be served in federal prisons increased from 23 to 75 months for weapons offenses and from 30 to 66 months for drug offenses. (Ibid., 1)